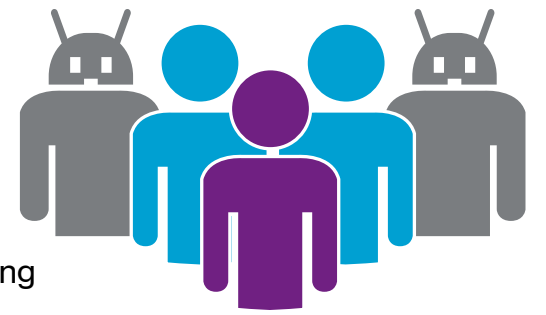# Myths about the future of work – busted!
Insights from the Global Future of Work Survey – India

Employers are moving beyond alarmist rhetoric about artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics.

As automation increasingly becomes the norm, workplace automation myths and stereotypes are giving way to new realities of what it takes to engage and lead talent in an evolving work ecosystem.

Myth #1: Organisations use automation primarily to reduce costs and improve accuracy.

Busted! More than half of the employers say the key goal of automation is to **augment human performance** and **productivity**.

This might suggest an emerging shift from the "first wave" of automation, which primarily focused on labour substitution, towards a more evolved application of work automation by supporting humans.

Support humans completing business processes	**46***%
Take over some of the work found in jobs and business processes	**29***%
Autonomously complete work	**14***%

*% answered 'to a great extent'

Pie chart values: 3%, 21%, 16%, 60%

- Avoid mistakes/risks
- Augment human performance and productivity
- Reduce costs
- Others

Myth #2: Workplace automation is the exclusive domain of IT.

Busted! A majority of employers say it will take breakthrough approaches in **HR** to meet the challenges of automation.

The following chart shows the areas in which employers believe breakthrough approaches will be needed, and what percentage believe this:

Performance management	Leadership development	Talent acquisition	Pay programmes	Organisational structure	Career management	HR's role
79%	**69**%	**64**%	**60**%	**60**%	**59**%	**59**%

However, **<12%** say HR functions are fully prepared:

- **27**% have reconfigured total rewards and benefits.
- **33**% have defined and enabled careers based on a more agile and flattened organisation structure.
- **37**% have taken steps to address talent deficits through workforce planning.
- **42**% have matched talent to new work requirements.

Over the next three years, employers expect **automation** will have a **significant impact** on leaders and managers' role.

- **86**% Supervisors will need to educate workers on how automation changes work.
- **64**% Leaders will need to think differently about the requirements and skills for successors and succession management as a result of automation.

Myth #3: Workplace automation will have a largely negative impact on workers and jobs.

Busted! Automation will result in **new combinations of work, skill requirements, talent and work relationships** involving a range of workers from FTEs* to contingents.

As jobs are deconstructed and certain tasks are automated, new types of work will be required. Skill premiums at both the high and low end will shift.

Impact of automation

Requiring us to have less full-time employees	Changing the way we design jobs so they can be done by employees with:	
	More skills	**Lower skills**
Today **31%**	Today **39%**	Today **31%**
In three years **61%**	In three years **54%**	In three years **61%**

*Full-time employees

Organisations will be changing the mix of types of workers they use, and expect to use a greater proportion of contingent workers in three years.

	Currently	In three years
Full-time employees	85%	**78%**
Part-time reduced hour employees	3%	**5%**
Consultant or outside agencies (e.g., those who work for a consulting firm, advertising agency)	5%	**5%**
Free agent workers (e.g., contractors or freelancers who work for themselves)	5%	**7%**
Worker on loan from other organisations	2%	**3%**
Free agents on a talent platform (e.g., Upwork, Topcoder)	0%	**1%**

Myth #4: Contingent workers are disengaged and not committed to your organisation's success.

Busted! About half of employers say that **contingent workers** — including part-timers, free agents and workers on loan from other organisations — are just as **likely to put in extra effort** as full-time employees.

Compared to full-time employees, how likely are each of the following groups to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected to help the organisation succeed?

Free agent workers (e.g., contractors or freelancers that work for themselves)

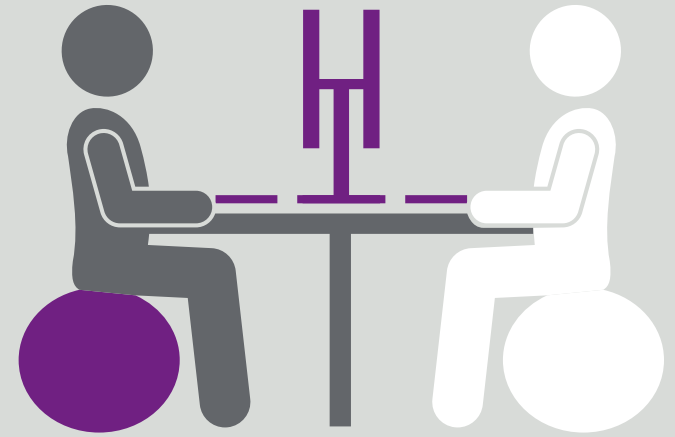| 22% | 63% | 15% |

Workers on loan from other organizations (e.g., talent exchanges)

| 41% | 46% | 13% |

Free agents on a talent platform (e.g., Upwork, Topcoder)

| 39% | 41% | 20% |

Part-time, reduced hour employees

| 33% | 60% | 7% |

■ Less likely   ■ Just as likely   ■ More likely

And about half of employers believe that these workers are just as likely to recommend their organisation as full-time employees, underscoring the importance of leaders and managers engaging and leading all talent in their work ecosystem.

A clear course of action

Break-through approaches are required in talent and rewards with new leader and manager activities to address shifting skillsets and a more diverse workforce.

1 **Deconstruct** and **reconstruct** jobs based on how automation impacts work.

2 **Define** the reskilling pathways.

3 **Lead** and **engage** around the new ways of working.

Ready for the future of work?

Moving beyond the myths will help your organisation better understand the many emerging options for getting work done, and identify the optimal combinations of human talent and automation.

Source: Willis Towers Watson Global Future of Work Survey — India.

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